

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ROME 04912 111709Z

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ACTION EUR-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 4912

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: PSDI CONGRESS

REF: ROME 4558

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: JUST CONCLUDED SOCIAL DEMOCRAT CONGRESS REVEALED VIRTUAL UNANIMITY ON POLICY LINES (I.E., SUPPORT OF EUROPEAN UNITY WITHIN ATLANTIC ALLIANCE FRAMEWORK, CONTINUED FULL SUPPORT FOR CENTER-LEFT IN GENERAL AND PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN PARTICULAR, REJECTION OF "HISTORIC COMPROMISE" WITH COMMUNISTS), BUT ENDED IN BITTER SHOWDOWN BETWEEN CENTER-RIGHT MAJORITY (TANASSI-PRETI) AND LEFT-MINORITY (SARAGAT). SKILLFUL MANIPULATION BY MAJORITY OF COMPLICATED VOTING MECHANISM REDUCED LEFT-MINORITY'S REPRESENTATION ON CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO APPROXIMATELY 13 PERCENT, ABOUT HALF ITS PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH AT CONGRESS. LEFT-WING BREAK-AWAY FROM PARTY IS THREATENED BY SOME, BUT ON BALANCE SEEMS UNLIKELY. END SUMMARY.

2. AT SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PARTY CONGRESS AT GENOA APRIL 2-6, ALL THREE PARTY FACTIONS (RIGHT, CENTER AND LEFT) AGREED IN SUBSTANCE UPON BASIC THRUSTS OF PARTY POLICY. ONLY SUBTLE DIFFERENCES OF SHADINGS MARKED THE OFT-REPEATED DECLARATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR NATO, EUROPEAN UNITY AND CONTINUED CLOSE TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES. DIFFERENCES ON DOMESTIC POLICY RELATED TO PSDI POSTURE TOWARD SOCIALISTS. CENTER AND RIGHT WANT PSDI TO PRESS HARD ON SOCIALISTS  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 04912 111709Z

TO DRAW FIRMER DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND COMMUNISTS

AND TO SYSTEMATICALLY REDUCE PSI COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNISTS IN REGIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. IN CONTRAST, LEFT MINORITY ARGUED PSDI SHOULD PURSUE SAME BASIC GOAL BY COURTING PSI INTO "PREFERENTIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH PSDI (WHILE AVOIDING "REPETITION OF ERROR OF SOCIALIST UNIFICATION"). VIRTUALLY ALL SPEAKERS AT CONGRESS LAMBASTED COMMUNIST BIDS FOR AN "HISTORIC COMPROMISE" BETWEEN PCI AND DC, CITING PHILOSOPHICAL INCOMPATIBILITY OF COMMUNISM WITH DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND NOTING DANGERS WHICH AN EVENTUAL DC-PCI ALLIANCE WOULD POSE FOR CONTINUED SURVIVAL OF SMALL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. WITH THAT THREAT IN MIND, PSDI CHAMBER LEADER CARIGLIA PROPOSED THAT IN COMING MONTHS PSDI TAKE LEADERSHIP IN ATTEMPT TO CONSTRUCT COMMON POLICY PROGRAM WITH REPUBLICANS AND SOCIALISTS, ASSERTING THAT IN POST-REFERENDUM PERIOD ONLY A "TWO-SIDED COALITION BETWEEN DC AND LEFT-FRONT" COULD ADEQUATELY ISOLATE COMMUNISTS AND ASSURE ACHIEVEMENT OF LONG RANGE REFORM GOALS OF CENTER LEFT.

3. DESPITE THE ABSENCE OF REAL CONFLICTS ON PRESENT PARTY POLICY, THE CONGRESS SPLIT SHARPLY, AND POSSIBLY DISASTROUSLY, BETWEEN PRESENT PARTY LEADERSHIP WHICH FEELS PSDI MUST LOOK TOWARD POLITICAL CENTER FOR ELECTORAL EXPANSION, AND SARAGAT-LED LEFT-MINORITY WHICH DEMANDS PARTY LIVE UP TO ITS TRADITION AS "PARTY OF THE LEFT" BY COMPETING FOR ELECTORAL SUPPORT WITH SOCIALISTS AND EVEN COMMUNISTS. THE CONGRESS OPENED WITH BRUTAL RECOGNITION OF THIS DIVISION WHEN PARTY SECRETARY ORLANDI RESPONDED TO PSDI FOUNDER SARAGAT'S COMPLAINT LAST WEEK THAT HE (SARAGAT) HAD "BECOME A SLAVE TO THOSE WHOM HE HAD HIMSELF CREATED", BY RECALLING THAT THE GOD SATURN HAD BEEN CONDEMNED TO HELL FOR SEEKING TO DEVOUR HIS CHILDREN. INTER-FACTIONAL CORDIALITY REMAINED ROUGHLY ON THIS LEVEL THROUGHOUT THE CONGRESS, ALTHOUGH CONCILIATORY SPEECHES BY SARAGAT AND FORMER DEPUTY PIETRO LONGO BRIEFLY SUGGESTED THAT TENSIONS WERE LESSENING AND EVENTUAL COMPROMISE WAS IN STORE. THE SARAGAT-LED MINORITY'S MAIN GOAL AT THE CONGRESS HAD BEEN THE INSTITUTION OF PROPORTIONAL VOTING WITHIN THE PARTY TO REPLACE A COMPLEX MAJORITY SYSTEM WHICH, THEY CHARGED, HAD ALREADY OPERATED TO REDUCE THEIR DELEGATE STRENGTH AT THE CONGRESS TO 26 PERCENT FROM A CLAIMED GRASS ROOTS STRENGTH OF APPROXIMATE ONE-THIRD. A COMPROMISE WAS WIDELY EXPECTED, BUT IN THE END DID NOT MATERIALIZE. INSTEAD, THE CENTER FACTION (54 PERCENT) AND THE RIGHT-WING FACTION (20 PERCENT) CAREFULLY

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 04912 111709Z

CONTROLLED THEIR VOTING PATTERNS IN AN OPERATIONAL ALLIANCE TO

MAXIMIZE THE MAJORITY'S NATURAL ADVANTAGE, AS A CONSEQUENCE OBTAINED 88 SEATS ON THE 101-MAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE, WHILE THE SARAGAT FACTION WAS HELD TO ONLY 13. WHILE MINORITY SPOKESMEN VOCIFEROUSLY OBJECTED TO THIS "FRAUD" FROM THE PODIUM AND THE FLOOR, THE MAJORITY LEADERSHIP DECLARED THE CONGRESS CLOSED AND LEFT THE HALL. SHORTLY THEREAFTER THE MINORITY LEADERS CALLED

A STRATEGY MEETING IN ROME FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 9, AMID ANGRY THREATS TO PULL THEIR FACTION OUT OF THE PARTY.

4. COMMENT: PUBLIC DISPLAY OF SOCIAL DEMONCRATIC DIVISION AND ALLEGATIONS THAT THE MAJORITY HAS ABUSED THE MINORITY'S RIGHTS ARE BOUND TO HURT THE PSDI IMAGE WHICH ALREADY SUFFERS FROM EARLIER MANIFESTATIONS OF DISHARMONY AND FROM WHAT EVEN THE MAJORITY NOW CONCEDES HAS BEEN A RELATIVELY UNIMAGINATIVE ROLE WITHIN THE CENTER-LEFT COALITION. THE MINORITY IS DEEPLY ANGERED AND FRUSTATED AT WHAT IT PERCEIVES AS SERIOUS INJUSTICE TOWARD IT BY THE PARTY MAJORITY. CONCEIVABLY SOME OF ITS LEADERSHIP COULD MAKE GOOD ON THEIR THREAT TO LEAVE THE PSDI, BUT AS A PRACTICAL MATTER THEY HAVE NO ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO GO: THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO POLITICAL SPACE FOR A NEW PARTY BETWEEN THE PSDI AND PSI, AND THE RIGHT-WING OF THE PSI IS ITSELF SUFFERING AND THUS OFFERS LITTLE SHELTER. ON BALANCE, THEREFORE, ANOTHER SHISM IN THE LONG HISTORY OF DIVISIONS AMONG THE LAY DEMOCRATIC LEFT DOES NOT SEEM IN STORE AT PRESENT. MEANWHILE, THE TANASSI-PRETI MAJORITY HAS STRENGTHENED ITS COLLECTIVE HOLD ON THE PARTY APPARATUS, ALTHOUGH MANEUVERINGS WITHIN IT MIGHT RESULT IN REPLACEMENT OF PARTY SECRETARY ORLANDI WHEN THE NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETS SHORTLY. VOLPE

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